

BUSINESS, HEALTH, NEWS

LYNN AGENCIES SHARE IN \$50M HEALTH FUNDING

BY ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN | November 4, 2021

LYNN — Mass General Brigham has announced it is investing \$50 million into a new, comprehensive community and mental-health strategy to improve the health of the communities it serves.

Partnering with 20 community-based organizations, the initiative targets programs to improve mental healthcare capacity, workforce development, chronic-disease management, and nutrition security and equity.

Some of these partner organizations include the [Lynn Food Security Task Force](#) and [Lynn Community Health Center](#), [My Brother's Table](#), [Greater Lynn Senior Services](#) and Salem State University.

Mass General Brigham President and CEO Dr. Anne Klibanski said this new community health strategy will address mental health, chronic disease, and food and nutrition insecurity by working with community health centers and organizations to increase services in communities with the greatest needs.

“The pandemic shined a light on long-standing barriers and inequities in healthcare,” Klibanski said. “At the same time, the mental-health system across Massachusetts reached a breaking point with dramatically increased need for care and limited capacity.”

As part of this initiative, Mass General Brigham is partnering with community-based agencies and schools of higher education across the state, including Salem State University, to create scholarship and loan-repayment programs, fellowships, stipends, and salary supplements for those in the mental-health field.

This will help to increase new mental-health staff in the state over the next several years, while building the capacity and expertise of the licensed and unlicensed mental health and addiction workforce, recovery coaches, and mental-health specialists.

The initiative will also expand Mass General Brigham’s mobile-health initiative, which was launched during the pandemic, to bring care to patients who have difficulty accessing a hospital or a community health center and to address emerging needs.

The mobile program will focus on Lynn, Chelsea, Revere, Everett, and the Greater Boston area, providing COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, expanding screening and management of hypertension, substance-use disorder treatment and harm reduction, community outreach, and the distribution of care kits and home health-monitoring equipment.

In regards to food and nutrition security, equity, and access, the initiative's partnerships with community-based organizations will increase access to fresh, healthy food and expand teaching kitchens to provide learning opportunities and improve nutrition for people with, or at risk for, cardiometabolic disease and substance-use disorders.

According to the Greater Boston Food Bank, food insecurity across Massachusetts increased by 55 percent from 2019 to 2020.

Mass General Brigham said the connection between food insecurity and nutrition-related chronic disease is the reason they are building on existing partnerships and adding capacity where needed with other funders, hunger-relief agencies, faith-based organizations, and government agencies.



Allysha Dunnigan

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